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FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK
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INFO RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO IMMEDIATE 0241
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 0213
RUEAHLA/HOMELAND SECURITY CENTER WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC IMMEDIATE
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/26/2016
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MASS](#) [NATO](#) [IC](#)
SUBJECT: 4/26-27 DEFENSE TALKS: ICELAND LOOKS FOR
POLITICAL HELP

REF: A. (A) REYKJAVIK 107
[1](#)B. (B) REYKJAVIK 140

Classified By: AMBASSADOR CAROL VAN VOORST, REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: EUCOM briefed Iceland Chief Defense Negotiator Albert Jonsson 4/26 on the Draft Concept Plan (the Conplan) for the Defense of Iceland. Jonsson responded 4/27 that the Conplan was fundamentally acceptable as a plan but did not go far enough toward meeting Iceland's political needs. He set out a list of references Reykjavik proposes to include in a U.S.-Icelandic agreement that could be used by the GOI to underpin their assurance to Icelanders that the U.S. commitment continues even without a base. This agreement would include references that Jonsson believes are necessary to help the government make the case to the public that the U.S. commitment to defend Iceland remains credible. While the U.S. studies the Icelandic defense proposals, working-level talks will continue on transition issues in preparation for 9/06 closure of Naval Air Station Keflavik (NASKEF). End summary.

Conplan 4287-06 and its Discontents

[1](#)2. (C) In its briefing to the Icelanders April 26, the U.S. European Command team led by RADM Richard Gallagher stressed that the EUCOM plan is not fully developed, that we welcome Icelandic comment, and explained the approval system as the plan moves up to SecDef. At several points in the discussion the U.S. side urged the Icelanders to take advantage of the intelligence sharing and other proposals that we offered in the March meeting (ref A).

[1](#)3. (C) Ambassador Albert Jonsson, the Icelandic delegation head, commented on the Conplan in a follow-up session April [1](#)27. He said that his side was disappointed with the plan as measured against Icelandic expectations of a U.S. commitment to a "robust" and "visible" replacement for the four F-15 fighters. While noting that the Conplan "has an internal logic and is consistent," Jonsson said the defense plan as it now stands is insufficient politically to reassure the Icelandic public, parliament, and ministers that Iceland is adequately defended.

[1](#)4. (C) He proposed that the defense plan be supplemented with a "conclusion" signed at the SecDef level and issued in conjunction with the completion of the plan. The conclusion would contain references to:

1) 1951 Defense Agreement.

2) Conplan 4287-06.

3) The resources and capabilities that stand behind the Conplan. Wording would not need to be specific as to what units might be deployed to Iceland but should cite the range of capabilities that the U.S. has available and where they are sourced.

4) How the U.S. would provide for Iceland's air defense. This would not need to specify what units might be deployed if the U.S. were to continue operation of the radar stations.

5) What personnel and facilities would be maintained at Keflavik to assist forces redeploying to Iceland.

6) Visible manifestations of the bilateral defense relationship, whether exercises or deployments or other ways of 'showing the flag.'

7) The option for Iceland to call on U.S. forces to defend against terrorist threats and attacks. In this regard Jonsson noted that the 1951 Defense Agreement is not specific in saying that it applies only to state threats (as the Conplan does); and cited NATO's Article 5 invocation after September 11 as evidence that military forces can properly respond to terrorist attacks.

8) What is envisaged with respect to law enforcement/non-military security cooperation. (Note: Ministry of Justice Deputy Permanent Secretary Stefan Eiriksson added that Reykjavik wishes to prioritize intelligence cooperation as described by the U.S. side in

March and hopes to enhance cooperation between the U.S. and Icelandic Coast Guards. He announced that the National Commissioner of Police and the Icelandic Coast Guard would contact the Embassy in early May to initiate collaboration in these areas as well as on training and non-proliferation activities. End note.)

15. (C) As to the Conplan itself, Jonsson asked for some specific changes and raised some questions:

-- pp. 1 and 2: Refer to "1951 Defense Agreement" or "bilateral 1951 Defense Agreement" rather than "Defense of Iceland."

-- p. 9: Delete "US mission will not include enforcing peacetime air sovereignty."

-- p. 10: To "GOI will continue to provide access to its territory," add "in accordance with the 1951 Defense Agreement."

-- p. 10: Why is "GOI will maintain Keflavik as an operating international airport" not a redundant assumption if the GOI is providing access to its territory? (Jonsson said we could leave this assumption in if we believed it did in fact add something.)

-- p. 21: Could the U.S. and Iceland undertake to defend Iceland bilaterally without NATO having to invoke collective defense? (Reassured that it could, Jonsson accepted the text as drafted.)

Follow-up

16. (C) Jonsson stated that the GOI would like to come to the next bilateral meeting with a draft text for this "conclusory" document. He hoped this meeting could take place very soon; Ambassador van Voorst said the U.S. would take this Icelandic proposal under consideration. In the meantime, both sides agreed, the governments should continue cooperation on the technical and practical aspects of disposing of NASKEF assets and ensuring smooth functioning of Keflavik International Airport after September 30, 2006. Jonsson reiterated five areas of Icelandic concern in this regard:

- 1) U.S. military footprint: What will remain after 9/30?
- 2) What is the timetable for transition?
- 3) In the event that few or no military forces remain, how will the U.S. maintain and monitor its installations in the Agreed Areas?
- 4) How will the U.S. carry out its host nation duties for NATO?
- 5) How does the U.S. wish to dispose of the special communications installation at Grindavik?

The U.S. side assured the GOI that we are working on these issues and will answer the Icelandic questions as soon as possible.

17. (C) Comment: Jonsson and his government want our help in reassuring the Icelandic public as concretely and believably as possible that the U.S. commitment to defend Iceland remains intact despite the pullout of the planes. Iceland's success in negotiating two agreed minutes with us during the 1990's is probably at the bottom of this new proposal for greater definition in our military and security relationship.

We may at some later point choose to seriously consider this option -- but before reaching for this device, we should explore all options of helping the GOI get the political cover it needs without the cost of the time, effort, and legal complexities of a signed understanding. End comment.
van Voorst